



## **NEWS**

### **Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2<sup>nd</sup> District**

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **RIDLEY-THOMAS CALLS PROTECTING YOUTH IN COUNTY'S DCFS CASELOAD 'A SENSE OF URGENCY'**

*He urges monthly reports to the Board of Supervisors to prevent  
similar child fatalities from occurring in Los Angeles County*

**LOS ANGELES** – Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today joined the call for an investigation of the deaths of 32 children from neglect and abuse in the County last year, and directed that monthly reports be presented to the Board to prevent similar incidents.

"I am startled at what I have learned. I hope that we do not find ourselves paralyzed in the face of these continuing problems," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

Earlier this month, the Board received reports of 32 children who died from neglect and abuse in the County in 2008. Fourteen of the children were in families that been under the scrutiny of child welfare officials.

The Board today directed the County's Chief Executive Officer – working in consultation with the Department of Children and Family Services and County Counsel – to report back in 30 days, and quarterly thereafter, on the cases in question. The cases included documentation of shocking events that led up to the tragic deaths of the children while in the custody of caregivers.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas asked that the issues of child safety come before the Board more frequently. In response, the Board ordered monthly reports.

“I don’t think that’s too often for this to be on our plate,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “We ought to have reports consistently in our faces until we figure how to drive a zero tolerance policy in very practical terms.”

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In the past, the Board has directed that systems be put in place to allow electronic data mining and information sharing between local and state agencies to assist the County in determining all of the agencies serving a family simultaneously. The Board has also been waiting for the development of the Children's Special Investigation Unit to independently review and provide support to DCFS in its own review of child fatality cases. The goal is to develop recommendations for improvements in service integration across County departments and in casework policies and procedures that will improve outcomes for children in the County.

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